

Is Tourism Recovering in the Post-epidemic Era? Evidence from the Chinese Market

Yiyang Ding *

Nubs, University of Nottingham Ningbo China, Ningbo, China

*Corresponding author: biyyd27@nottingham.edu.cn

Abstract. This essay surveys and summarizes the causes of these economies' severe losses as well as their recovery plans in the event of a pandemic in China as the pandemic has significantly impacted the tourism economies. It argues that the epidemic has obviously had a valid impact on the tourism economy, as seen by the high unemployment rate and the fact that the sector is struggling to make ends meet through the collection of data from 2017 to 2021 from State Statistics Bureau and Xinhua. Three areas can be observed in the recession of the tourism economies: the tourism industries, the tourism employees, and the tourism customers. Due to these three factors, the recovery plans for China's tourist cities were broken down into four categories: government funding assistance and ticketing regulations; promotion of the nation's international image; new local forms of tourism like cloud, culture, and rural travel; and the expansion of China's "dark tourism.". In general, the study of the tourism economy will enable us to better plan the growth of the domestic tourism industry and adapt it to a more tailored approach to the Chinese setting.

Keywords: Tourism economies; effects; recover; regulations.

1. Introduction

Every nation in the globe has faced several pandemics throughout the years, but COVID-19 is the most recent to have an impact on the entire world community. The world's whole continent is now in a precarious situation because to the corona virus, making it impossible for the world's economic superpowers to stop it [1]. This virus has significantly affected the global economies as well. Deloitte noted that "COVID-19 could affect the global economy in three primary ways: by directly influencing output (supply); by causing supply chain and market disruptions (supply); and by its financial impact on enterprises and markets" [2]. Since the tourism industry is one of the biggest and fastest expanding in the world, tourism economies have also significantly affected the global economies [3]. In general, the tourism businesses have been significantly impacted because of the government beginning to act to restrict travel to slow the rapid spread of the highly contagious illness throughout the world. Therefore, the pandemic has also had a huge impact on tourism economies at the same time. This essay aims to discuss the downturn of tourism economies and the recovery strategies of the recession. There are huge number of articles also focusing on tourism economies in China under pandemic, most of them are using the same function, for instance, initially introduce the background, and the effects of pandemic on tourism economy and finally the solutions on how to recover the tourism economies. Nonetheless, even though these articles primarily serve the same purpose, their authors may still have included some unique and distinctive thoughts. Therefore, these publications and studies were incredibly beneficial to my research because they gave me a lot of background knowledge, motivation for my research, and helpful statistics. Furthermore, it is customary for their articles to contain a number of quantitative models to support their arguments as well. As a result, the models may more correctly reflect the situation of the tourism economy at now and suggest pertinent solutions and strategies for the current crisis. In this case, it is now easier and more evident to understand the core and key information of China's tourism economies thanks to the research that has recently been done on the tourism economies in China that are affected by the pandemic. Text-only descriptions, however, can be rigid and tedious, making it challenging for readers to discover something fresh and fascinating to read. The purpose of this essay is to explore the pandemic-affected tourism economies in China by presenting several representative cases and conducting data analysis that focuses on examining the consequences of the epidemic and the measures employed by the

economies to recover. In addition, the article's precise organizational structure begins with the introduction of the overall background information, followed by the introduction of tourism economies in China under pandemic and reasons why the recovery of tourism economies problematic, an explanation of the effects of the tourism economies in China under pandemic, and finally a discussion about the recovery plans of tourism economies in China under pandemic.

2. Description of Tourism economies in China

In December 2019, a highly contagious virus suddenly appeared in China and spread rapidly around the world, governments began to take lock down measures, so people were not allowed to leave their homes and go travelling [4], which led to a difficult situation for the tourist economy [5]. According to the figure 1, the data on tourism economy from 2017 to 2021, there is a sharp decrease in domestic travelers and revenue after the outbreak of COVID-19 [6].

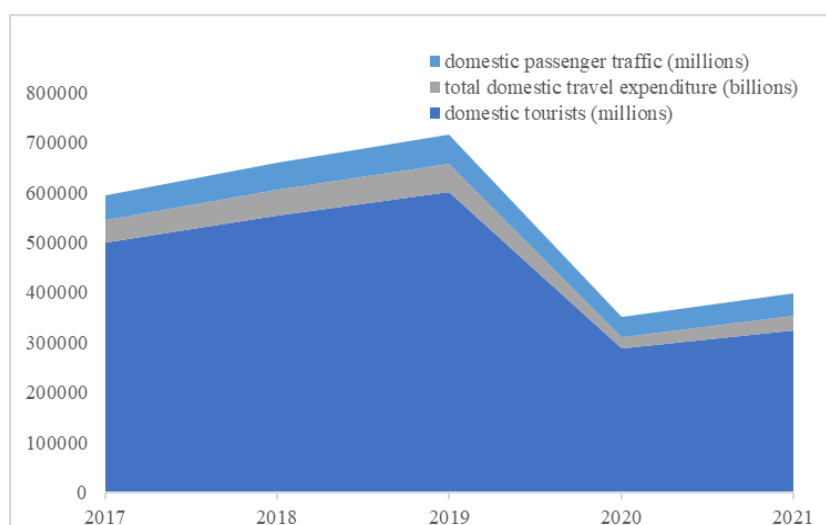


Fig 1. China's tourism industry in the period 2017-2021.

Additionally, unemployment has also become serious not only in the tourism industry. Moreover, the tourism, hotel, and entertainment sectors' revenue during the 2020 Spring Festival in China decreased by more than 140 billion USD [7]. Nevertheless, during the 10-day Chinese Spring Festival holiday in 2020, 190 million passengers were transported by rail, road, and water, which is a 73% decrease from the same time in 2019 [8].

There is a sharp decrease in domestic travelers and revenue after the outbreak of COVID-19, the results are shown in Figure 2.

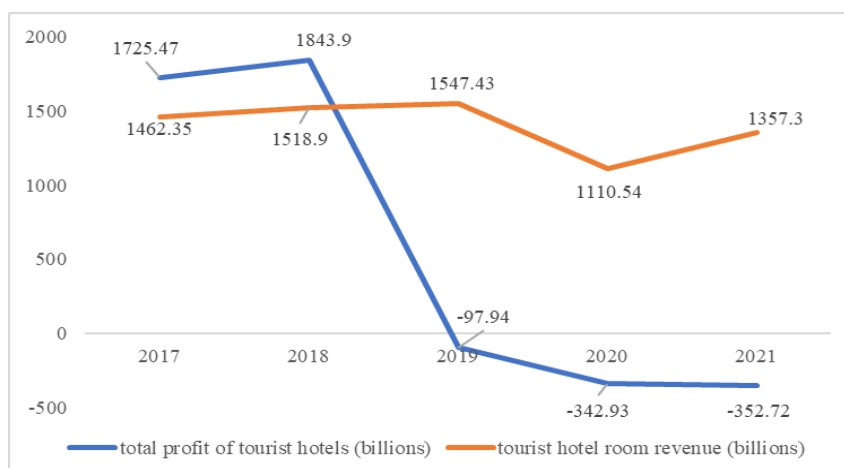


Fig 2. China's tourism hotels in the period 2017-2021.

Unemployment has also become serious not only in the tourism industry. The results of employee's number in tourist hotels in the period 2017-2021 are shown in Figure 3.

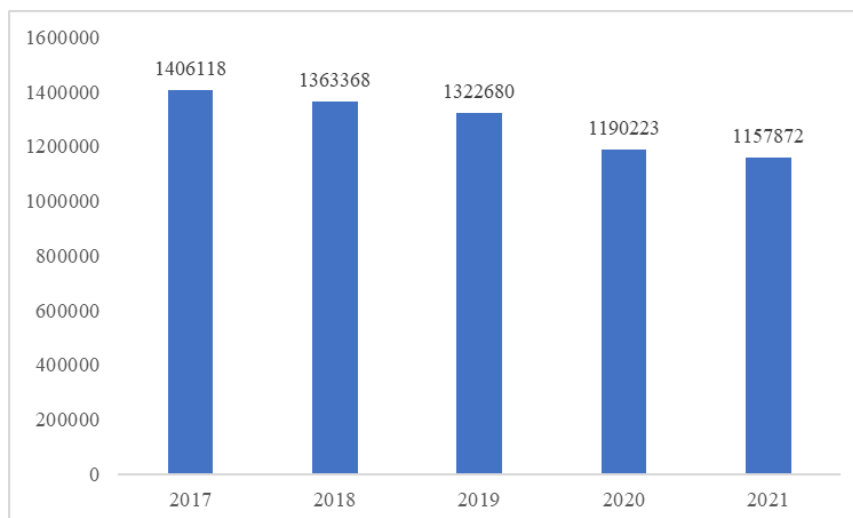


Fig 3. Number of employees in tourist hotels in the period 2017-2021.

However, due to the negative effects of COVID-19 and the strengthening of national response tools, on the evening of 26 December 2022, the National Health Commission issued its latest announcement, renaming novel coronavirus pneumonia as novel coronavirus infection, and implementing "Category B B control" from 8 January 2023 [9]. This announcement has reinvigorated people's confidence in travel reflected by the statistics from Xinhua Network, this year's Spring Festival holiday saw 308 million domestic visitor trips, up 23.1% year over year, as reported by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism's data center [10]. Domestic tourism brought in RMB 375.843 billion, up 30% from the previous year. In general, the national cultural and tourism market was secure, stable, and well-run.

3. The Effects of the Tourism Economies in China under Pandemic.

Due to the pandemic, tourism economy is amid a downturn. The situation of tourism economy in recession generally can be seen in three aspects. For tourism industry initially, there will be high stress of operating and high reduction of money caused by the loss of motivation of employees for employees' worries about losing their jobs or working in a crowds-risk of infection, so the inefficiency of working will occur frequently in the industry [11]. Besides, for employees of tourism industry, as mentioned before in the charts, the number of unemployed people will arise especially in the tourism industry because of the reduced revenue, and they may work inefficiently and helpless [12]. Thus, they could become less motivated to work, lose their attention, and be ineffective, which would lead to a low rate of task completion and a decline in industry earnings. Additionally, as for consumers, they will pay more attention on hygiene and quality of the sanitary environment in the landscape, and this is because this pneumonia is a highly contagious disease [11]. Therefore, in terms of how contagious pandemic is, people may prefer to stay at home and try to avoid going out to ensure their safety. Consequently, businesses that are having trouble making ends meet, employees who are being lazy, and people who are in fear of the pandemic have all contributed to the downturn in China's tourism economy.

More specifically, even though people are still traveling within the country, far fewer people are leaving for other countries than they were before the outbreak. This is a result of the various outbreak prevention and control strategies used both domestically and internationally. The public and the government collaborated from the very beginning of the epidemic to encourage the adoption of technological and managerial measures, as well as the combined prevention and control of the

epidemic on all fronts, and the results were promptly attained. The implementation of epidemic prevention and control in the United States has been uneven, primarily because: conflicting demands for individual freedom and social selfishness, which do not easily form a consensus; economic first/decision makers' selfishness (family business, votes) dominating; personal interest/self-centeredness; difficulties in government/people coordination; uneven development of states, which makes it difficult to cooperate in joint prevention and control [13]. Moreover, in many European countries, herd immunization has been applied. To build a community-wide resistance to the pandemic, the UK pioneered the use of natural immunity to achieve herd immunity, much as it did in the early days of the epidemic [14]. In general, travel overseas has significantly decreased because of the actual preventive and control measures implemented, in addition to national controls and travel limitations.

4. The Recovery Plans of Tourism Economies in China under Pandemic.

As seen by the two inquiries above, the tourism economy is of vital significance and the recovery of it is also considerable. The pandemic has had a significant negative impact on the tourism economy; thus, tourism economy needs to recover. Four aspects of the recovery plans for China's tourist cities were divided into categories: ticketing regulations and financial assistance from the government; promotion of the country's international image; new forms of local tourism such as cloud, culture, and rural travel; and the growth of China's "dark tourism."

Initially, as for the ticketing regulations, in response to the decline in domestic travel, regional tourism bureaus and tourist destinations introduced ticketing restrictions. To retain the clients' trust, local tourist attractions offered full refund and discount policies [15]. Besides, government financial support the support and subsidization of tourism of government in China by providing additional allowances to companies, reducing, and exempting interest and coordinating with banks to loan repayments [7]. Obviously, these may reduce unemployment because industries with financial support are under less financial pressure, so they are not yet able to alleviate the financial crisis by laying off staff, but they are also short-term and somehow small scales.

In the case of international image, international gatherings were held during the domestic pandemic's recovery phase to spread the story of China's tourism industry's quick resiliency to the entire world [15]. For example, the "Foreigners in China Traveling to Wuhan" event was held in October 2020 and was sponsored by the Wuhan Municipal Bureau of Culture and Tourism. Visitors felt a sense of security and contentment throughout the event. Moreover, there is uses of traditional Chinese medicine in COVID-19. TCM's function as a potential tourism recovery drawcard to improve China's inbound tourism following COVID-19 can be illuminated by integrating viewpoints from the disciplines of TCM, health communication, and tourism management [16].

The development of new forms of tourism is also considerable. The major Chinese tourist destinations started "cloud tourism" to advertise their travel-related goods and services on online platforms despite rigorous travel restrictions. One important strategy was to provide vivid footage of the local cuisine, way of life, and tourist attractions to pique people's interest in returning to the city after the pandemic [16]. Moreover, it is essential to centered on the creation of offline or online initiatives aimed at transmitting traditional Chinese culture [16]. For instance, there are many online museums like Qin Shi Huang Imperial Tombs Museum to allow tourists visiting it without going out. In addition, health and sports tourism are also recommended [17]. These new forms of tourism may boost the passion of people's travel and approximately can ensure the recovery of tourism economy.

The China's dark tourism as one of the potential measures for tourist recovery, tourists were drawn in by the portrayal of the nation's resilience and perseverance in the hospital scenes and in the accounts of people who had survived the plague. To show appreciation for the medical workers that fought the epidemic on the front lines, entrance subsidies and discounts were also provided. The final tourist draw was focused on the mourning of those lost in the struggle against the pandemic and the passing

on of national patriotism. Therefore, it conveyed good wishes for the deceased to rest in peace and encouraged the living to face challenges head-on without fear [16].

5. Conclusion

Considering the pandemic's devastating effects on these economies' tourism sectors, this essay examines and summarizes the factors that led to their heavy losses as well as their recovery strategies in the event of a pandemic in China. It makes the case that the epidemic clearly had a negative influence on the tourism industry, as seen by the high unemployment rate and the fact that the industry is having financial difficulties, as shown by the gathering of data and information. This essay generally demonstrates the introduction of the tourism economies in China under the pandemic, the factors that make the recovery of the tourism economies challenging, the effects of the tourism economies in China under the pandemic, and the plans for the tourism economies in China under the pandemic. Additionally, this essay may be of particular interest to academics who are looking to learn more about the tourism economies that are experiencing a pandemic in China or who wish to gather data regarding these economies in other nations due to the possibility that this essay will still be useful for research on the pandemic tourist economies affecting not only China but also the rest of the world. The study in this thesis, however, still has a lot of flaws and restrictions. The quantitative analysis in this article still falls short of what is needed; it mostly focuses on data that is pertinent to the context and offers less evidence to consider in the causes and solutions section, and the overall financial analysis model is not yet complete. In order to make the study of China's tourism economy under the pandemic more structured, standardized, and professionalized, it is therefore necessary to build a more thorough and accurate research model for future research.

References

- [1] Abodunrin O, Adesola B. CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC AND ITS IMPLICATION ON GLOBAL ECONOMY. 2020.
- [2] Abdelmaksoud K M, Hathout H, Albagoury S H. The socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on the petroleum sector in Egypt: a descriptive analysis. *International journal of social economics*, 2022(1):49.
- [3] Ranasinghe R, Damunupola A, Wijesundara S, et al. Tourism after Corona: Impacts of covid 19 pandemic and way forward for tourism, hotel and mice industry in Sri Lanka, 2020.
- [4] OECD. Tourism policy responses to the coronavirus (COVID-19). URL:<https://oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/tourism-policy-responses-to-the-coronavirus-covid-19-6466aa20/>, last accessed 2023/2/23.
- [5] Marco Ciotti, Massimo Ciccozzi, Alessandro Terrinoni, Wen-Can Jiang, Cheng-Bin Wang & Sergio Bernardini. The COVID-19 pandemic, *Critical Reviews in Clinical Laboratory Sciences*, 2020, 57(6):365-388.
- [6] State Statistics Bureau. URL: <http://www.stats.gov.cn/>, last accessed 2023/2/23.
- [7] Lina Zhong, Sunny Sun, Rob Law & Xiaonan Li. Tourism crisis management: evidence from COVID-19, *Current Issues in Tourism*, 2021.24(19): 2671-2682,
- [8] Ka Yin Chau, Jingjing Zheng, Dasen Yang, Huawen Shen & Ting Liu. Contingency Approach for Tourism Industry: The application of China model in crisis management during the outbreak and pandemic of COVID-19, *Journal of China Tourism Research*, 2022.
- [9] National Health Commission: New Coronary Pneumonia renamed to Novel Coronavirus Infection, "Category B, Category B Control" from January 8_Health News Chengdu High-tech Zone. URL: http://www.cdht.gov.cn/cdht/c151989/2022-12/27/content_ac7aebef9eef48208d36dee239e498e9.shtml, last accessed 2023/2/23.
- [10] Xinhua Net. 308 million domestic tourism trips during 2023 Spring Festival holiday. URL:http://www.news.cn/fortune/2023-01/27/c_1129315503.htm, last accessed 2023/2/23.

- [11] Zhong, Lina, et al. "Perception, reaction, and future development of the influence of COVID-19 on the hospitality and tourism industry in China." *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 19.2 (2022): 991.
- [12] Song, Yun, et al. "Does the COVID-19 pandemic affect the tourism industry in China? Evidence from extreme quantiles approach." *Economic Research-Ekonomska Istraživanja* 35.1 (2022): 2333-2350.
- [13] Deng Q, Gao Y, Wang C-Y et al. *International Comparisons and Core Capacity Building for New Coronary Pneumonia Outbreak Response*. China Science Foundation, 2020, 34(06):712-718.
- [14] BBC News Chinese. The new crown epidemic: the shift from herd immunization to universal vaccination strategies URL: <https://www.bbc.com/zhongwen/simp/world-58615330>, last accessed 2023/2/24.
- [15] Yang, Luqi, Xiaoni Li, and Ana Beatriz Hernández-Lara. "Tourism and COVID-19 in China: recovery and resilience strategies of main Chinese tourism cities." *International Journal of Tourism Cities ahead-of-print* (2022).
- [16] Wen, Jun, et al. "Traditional Chinese medicine as a tourism recovery drawcard to boost China's inbound tourism after COVID-19." *Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics* 34.2 (2022): 385-400.
- [17] Shao, Yuhong, et al. "What is the policy focus for tourism recovery after the outbreak of COVID-19? A co-word analysis." *Current Issues in Tourism* 24.7 (2021): 899-904.